



The Health Buzz

The official newsletter of the United States Virgin Islands Department of Health

Our Mission: To reduce health risks, increase access to quality healthcare and enforce health standards.

Health Department and VITEMA Lead Operation Pan-Prepared Tabletop Exercise

The Department of Health, in conjunction with the Virgin Islands Territorial Emergency Management Agency (VITEMA), organized a tabletop exercise last week to bring relevant agencies together to assess the readiness of the Virgin Islands



public health and healthcare systems to respond to a public health emergency. This exercise identified areas of strength and opportunities to strengthen the territorial response to a potential outbreak.

Health Commissioner Justa Encarnacion and VITEMA Director Daryl Jaschen collaborated on 'Operation Pan-Prepared', a six-hour tabletop exercise on Friday, February 21st, that allowed for open discussions with various

government agencies and private sector partners. The desired outcome was a more structured territorial preparedness plan and many key areas were addressed.

"This process brought together a wide cross-section of the territory's agencies and private sector partners to practice a simulated response to a potential case of an infectious respiratory disease outbreak, such as COVID-19," said Commissioner Encarnacion. "Through continued collaboration, the USVI has addressed some of our potential gaps and shortfalls."

As the lead public health official for the territory, Commissioner Encarnacion has been coordinating an interagency COVID-19 task force that meets weekly to discuss international and national updates, and the territory's level of preparedness.

"VITEMA is committed to bringing all necessary stakeholders to the table for this collaborative process," said Director Jaschen. "We are confident in our ability to respond should an outbreak impact the territory."

(Continued on the next page)

Employee of the Month

JANUARY 2020

St. Croix
Aubrey Drummond II

St. Thomas
Ermine Hendrickson

FEBRUARY 2020

St. Croix
Floyd Hendersen

St. Thomas
Delony Penn

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 V.I. Health and Police Departments Battle Opioid Abuse
- 2 Department of Health Monitors Coronavirus
- 3 Sick With Flu
50th Annual Agriculture & Food Fair
- 4 Environmental Health Training in Emergency Response (EHTER)
We're Hiring
- 5 Celebrate these Medical Pioneers this Black History Month
- 6 Know the Facts about HEART DISEASE
- 7 What's in Your Emergency Kit

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Continued from page 1

Other agencies that participated in last week's successful exercise include: Virgin Islands National Guard, Virgin Islands Port Authority, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, U.S. Coast Guard, Juan F. Luis Hospital, Schneider Regional Medical Center, Emergency Medical Services, Department of Labor's Division of Occupational Safety and Health, Department of Public Works, Department of Education, Department of Property and Procurement, Department of Human Services, Department of Licensing and Consumer Affairs, Department of Finance, Virgin Islands Fire Service, Virgin Islands Police Department, Virgin Islands Bureau of Information Technology, Bureau of Internal Revenue, Office of the Lieutenant Governor, Virgin Islands Judiciary, Office of the Delegate to Congress, West Indian Company Limited, Virgin Islands Hotel and Tourism Association and Limetree Bay Terminals.

The Health Department's Director of Public Health Preparedness Francine Lang and Territorial Epidemiologist Dr. Esther Ellis are working with the Juan F. Luis Hospital, Schneider Regional Medical Center and other healthcare partners to ensure consistencies in staff education, training, reporting and capacity-building. Another key priority is addressing protocols for the points of entry into the territory.

Health Department officials remain in constant communication with health officials in Puerto Rico, the British Virgin Islands, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to stay abreast of latest news and plans for preventing the spread of COVID-19. "This tabletop exercise was an opportunity to tap into the partnerships that

exist within the territory to address any potential public health emergency and demonstrate a whole-of-community approach to emergency response," said Director of Public Health Preparedness Francine Lang.

Health Commissioner Justa Encarnacion advises residents that while COVID-19 should be taken seriously, residents should also take precautions to avoid the spread of influenza by getting the flu vaccine, washing hands regularly with soap and warm water, covering your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing, using a flexed elbow when coughing, and avoiding close contact with anyone with cold or flu-like symptoms.

COVID
CORONAVIRUS
DISEASE
19

STOP THE SPREAD OF GERMS

Help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases like COVID-19.

Avoid close contact with people who are sick.



Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.



Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.



Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.



Stay home when you are sick, except to get medical care.



Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.





For more information: www.cdc.gov/COVID19

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Page 3 | Virgin Islands Department of Health

February 2020 | Volume 2 | Issue 2

Save the Date

Free Zika Specialty Screening

*Are you concerned
about how your
child is growing and
developing?*

For children 0-4 years old
Call to make an appointment
(340) 626-1585

Specialists will be on-site conducting free screenings for:



VISION



HEARING



BRAIN



DEVELOPMENT

St. Croix

March 30-31, 2020

MCH Clinic: Modular Building #5

St. Thomas

April 2-4, 2020

MCH Clinic: Elaine Co. Building



Call (340) 626-1585 to make an appointment!

Sponsored by US Virgin Islands Department of Health



Celebrating Medical Pioneers this Black History Month

In honor of Black History Month, here are a few exceptional clinicians and healthcare professionals who advanced medicine and race relations in the U.S.



1. Alexander Augusta, MD. First black physician appointed director of a U.S. hospital. Alexander

Augusta earned his medical degree at Trinity Medical College in Toronto, Canada, and established a successful medical practice in Canada before relocating to the U.S. in 1862. Drafted to serve in the Civil War, Dr. Augusta became the first commissioned black surgeon in the U.S. Army. He later became the first black physician to direct a U.S. hospital — Freedman's Hospital in Washington D.C. After leaving Freedman's, Dr. Augusta continued in private practice and became a professor at Howard University Medical Department in Washington D.C.



3. Robert Boyd, MD. President and co-founder of the first professional organization for black physicians. The National

Medical Association is the nation's oldest and largest organization representing black physicians and healthcare professionals. Racial exclusivity and segregation laws at the turn of the 20th century made black physician membership in America's other professional organizations, such as the American Medical Association, virtually impossible. Black physicians frustrated by professional disenfranchisement created the NMA to serve the black medical community. Robert Boyd, MD, of Nashville, Tenn., was appointed the group's first president in 1895.



2. Patricia Bath, MD. First black female physician awarded a patent for a medical invention. Patricia Bath

received her medical degree from Howard University College of Medicine in Washington, D.C. She interned at Harlem Hospital in New York City from 1968 to 1969 and completed a fellowship in ophthalmology at Columbia University from 1969 to 1970. Dr. Bath's accomplishments include the invention of a new device and technique for cataract surgery known as laserphaco, for which she was the first black woman to receive a medical patent. She was the first woman appointed chair of ophthalmology at a U.S. medical institution (UCLA) in 1983. Dr. Bath retired from her post 10 years later and has since become an advocate for telemedicine, serving in roles related to the emerging technology at Howard University and St. George's University in Grenada.



4. Lonnie Bristow, MD. First black physician elected president of the American Medical Association. Lonnie

Bristow earned his medical degree at New York University and practiced as an internist in San Pablo, Calif., for more than 30 years. Dr. Bristow joined the AMA in 1968 after the organization banned racial discrimination within its ranks and allowed black membership. In 1994, Dr. Bristow became the first black physician to lead the organization. Under his leadership, the organization focused on many of the issues Dr. Bristow dedicated his career to, including sickle cell anemia, coronary care and socioeconomic issues impacting healthcare.



5. Joycelyn Elders, MD. First black female physician appointed surgeon general. Born to a family of

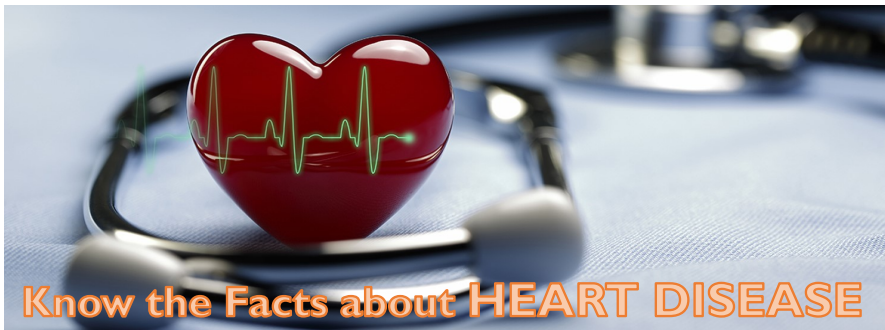
impoverished farmers in 1933, Jocelyn Elders grew up in a rural, segregated pocket of Arkansas. In spite of socioeconomic obstacles, Dr. Elders earned her medical degree from the University of Arkansas Medical School in Little Rock in 1960. She returned to the university for her residency in 1961, after which she became chief resident responsible for a team of all-white, all-male residents and interns. Arkansas Gov. Bill Clinton appointed Dr. Elders director of the Arkansas Department of Health in 1987. As U.S. President, Mr. Clinton appointed Dr. Elders the first black U.S. surgeon general in 1993.



6. Donna Christian-Christensen, MD. First female physician elected to Congress. Representing the U.S. Virgin Islands,

Dr. Christian-Christensen is the first female physician to serve as an elected member of Congress. She earned her medical degree from George Washington University School of Medicine in Washington, D.C., in 1970 and completed her residency in family medicine at Howard University Medical Center in Washington, D.C. Dr. Christian-Christensen served in Congress from 1997 - 2015. In 2014, Christensen announced that she would not seek re-election to a 10th term in the House, and would instead run for governor of the Virgin Islands.¹ Her nine terms of service in the House made her the Virgin Islands' second-longest serving Delegate, behind only Ron de Lugo, the territory's first statutory representative in Congress.

SOURCE: <https://www.beckershospitalreview.com/hospital-management-administration/21-medical-pioneers-to-celebrate-this-black-history-month.html>



more information on being active.
<http://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/index.html>

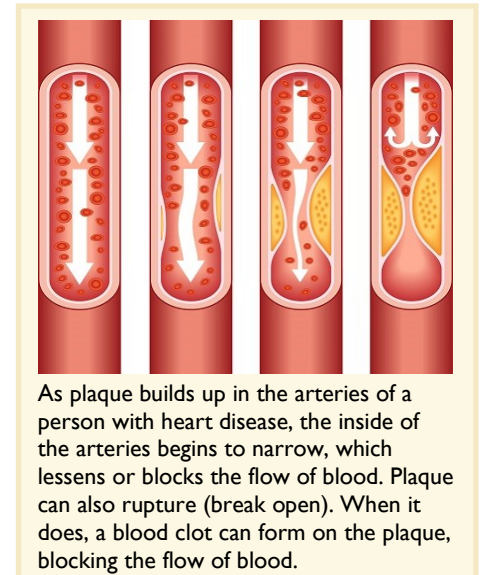
Prevent or treat your other health conditions, especially high blood pressure, high cholesterol, and diabetes.

How is it treated?

If you have heart disease, lifestyle changes, like those just listed, can help lower your risk for complications. Your doctor also may prescribe medication to treat the disease. Talk with your doctor about the best ways to reduce your heart disease risk. For more information, learn more from the following websites.

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Division for Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention: <http://www.cdc.gov/dhbsp/index.htm>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Center on Birth Defects & Developmental Disabilities: <http://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/birthdefects/default.htm>
- American Heart Association: <http://www.americanheart.org>
- National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute: <http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov>

SOURCE: https://www.cdc.gov/heartdisease/docs/ConsumerEd_HeartDisease.pdf



What is heart disease?

Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States. More than 600,000 Americans die of heart disease each year. That's one in every four deaths in this country.

The term "heart disease" refers to several types of heart conditions. The most common type is coronary artery disease, which can cause a heart attack. Other kinds of heart disease may involve the valves in the heart, or the heart may not pump well and cause heart failure. Some people are born with heart disease.

Are you at risk?

Anyone, including children, can develop heart disease. It occurs when a substance called plaque builds up in your arteries. When this happens, your arteries can narrow over time, reducing blood flow to the heart.

- Smoking, eating an unhealthy diet, and not getting enough exercise all to increase your risk of having heart disease.
- Having high cholesterol, high blood pressure or diabetes also can increase your risk for heart disease. Ask your doctor about preventing or treating these medical conditions.

What are the signs and symptoms?

The symptoms vary depending on the type of heart disease. For many people, chest discomfort or a heart attack is the first sign. Someone having a heart attack may experience several symptoms, including:

- Chest pain or discomfort that

doesn't go away after a few minutes.

- Pain or discomfort in the jaw, neck, or back.
- Weakness, light-headedness, nausea (feeling sick to your stomach), or a cold sweat.
- Pain or discomfort in the arms or shoulder.
- Shortness of breath. If you think that you or someone you know is having a heart attack, call 9-1-1 immediately.

How is heart disease diagnosed?

Your doctor can perform several tests to diagnose heart disease, including chest X-rays, coronary angiograms, electrocardiograms (ECG or EKG), and exercise stress tests. Ask your doctor about what tests may be right for you.

- **Can it be prevented?** You can take several steps to reduce your risk for heart disease:
- **Don't smoke.** CDC's Office on Smoking and Health Web site has information on quitting smoking. <http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco>.
- **Maintain a healthy weight.** CDC's Healthy Weight Web site includes information and tools to help you lose weight. <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/index.html>.
- **Eat a healthy diet.** Tips on reducing saturated fat in your diet are available on the Web site for CDC's Division for Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity. <http://www.cdc.gov/nutrition/everyone/basics/fat/saturatedfat.html>.
- **Exercise regularly.** Visit CDC's Physical Activity Web site for

What's in Your Emergency Supply Kit?

The first thing any family or business should do prior to an emergency situation is create an Emergency Supply Kit. Once you have taken this set you can improve the nutritional quality of the foods you pack by following these simple steps. Make a list of healthy food items that can be stored without refrigeration and that require no electricity to prepare.

my
emergency
supply kit

Consider these healthy snack options for your list:

Oranges—the thick skin keeps the fruit fresh longer than others.

Nuts—can keep you fuller longer.

Oatmeal—can be made by boiling water on a gas stove.

Beans—can add a healthy change from other room-temperature foods.

Dried fruit—high energy snacks that sweetly satisfy.

Granola—a great source of whole grains and filling for many hours.

Canned tuna—a healthy option for most people during a disaster. Eat up to 6 ounces of albacore tuna per week or up to 12 ounces of canned light tuna per week according to the U.S Food and Drug Administration.

Crackers and peanut butter—a

small amount can provide protein and good fat and help avoid overindulgence of sweets.

Stove-top popcorn—a fun food to cook when kids need a distraction and a healthy snack to eat.

Sports drinks—look for lower sugar content.

Canned juices—look for 100% fruit juice.

During an emergency:

- Eat your fresh food first: bread, fruits or vegetables, and food from the refrigerator while it's still cold.
- Next, eat your frozen food.
- Remember to include the special foods that infants/children and

your pets will need as well.

- Condiments - particularly those that are vinegar-based - such as ketchup, mustard, soy sauce, and BBQ sauce have long shelf lives.
- Store boxes of powdered milk or shelf-stable cartons for cereal or desserts.
- Dried fruits, nuts and spices added to other foods can boost flavor.
- Don't forget a manual can opener!



Finally, eat your emergency food and any canned foods you have stored. Additional tips for prepping your pantry and planning an emergency menu: Understand safe temperature zones of perishable food. When the power goes out, keep the refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible. The refrigerator, if unopened, will keep food cold for about four hours. A full freezer will maintain its temperature for approximately 48 hours (24 hours if it's half full) if the door remains closed.

Remember to keep your emergency supply food separate from your regular food and check expiration dates often to restock as needed.

SOURCE: <http://www.healthiestweightflorida.com/activities/healthy-emergency-food.html>





UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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The Health Buzz

Our New Radio Show

MONDAYS FROM 10 A.M. - 12 P.M.



